

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L 5132

FOR THORNE FROM AMBASSADOR

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR EG US

SUBJECT: EGYPT AND SFM

1. I WAS TOLD BY MEMBERS OF CODELS WHO VISITED SFM THAT YOU EXPRESSED SOME CONCERN ABOUT EGYPTIAN ATTITUDES AS REFLECTED IN SLOW PACE OF PRIVILEGES AND IMMUNITIES AGREEMENT AND RELATED MATTERS. I GATHER THIS HAS CAUSED SOME UNEASINESS AMONG SFM MEMBERS AND PROMPTED YOU TO GIVE INSTRUCTIONS THAT NO R&R BE TAKEN IN EGYPT UNTIL ISSUE IS RESOLVED. I WAS ALSO TOLD OF ALLEGED "HARASSMENT" BY EGYPTIAN MILITARY POLICE ON EAST BANK AND SUEZ CANAL CROSSINGS IN NOT RECOGNIZING MINWAR ID CARDS ISSUED TO YOUR PEOPLE. IN GENERAL, PERHAPS WRONGLY, CODEL MEMBERS CAME AWAY WITH IMPRESSION OF CONSIDERABLE SFM DISSATISFACTION WITH EGYPTIANS.

2. I HOLD NO BREIF FOR EGYPTIAN SLUGGISHNESS, BUT SLOW PACE OF PRIVILEGES AND IMMUNITIES AGREEMENT WAS PREDICTABLE AND PREDICTED. US SHARES THE BLAME IN TERMS OF OUR LONG DELAY IN BEGINNING NEGOTIATIONS. THE PROBLEM IS A SENSITIVE ONE FOR THE EGYPTIANS, INVOLVING AS IT DOES A SECOND FOREIGN PRESENCE IN ALREADY OCCUPIED SINAI, AND THEY ARE MOVING WITH CAUTION. THEY MAY NOT WANT TO GIVE US AS MUCH AS WE INITIALLY SOUGHT, BUT I AM CONFIDENT A SATISFACTORY AGREEMENT WILL EVENTUALLY BE DEVELOPED. WE WENT THROUGH THIS WHOLE

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PROCEDURE ONCE BEFORE IN CONNECTION WITH THE AGREEMENT FOR

US NAVY PERSONNEL INVOLVED IN CLEARANCE OF SUEZ CANAL. IN THE END, IT ALL WORKED OUT VERY SATISFACTORILY TO BOTH PARTIES.

3. IT IS CLEARLY FOR YOU TO DECIDE WHETHER OR NOT TO SEND SFM PEOPLE TO EGYPT ON R&R. I PERSONALLY SEE NO REASON WHY THEY SHOULD NOT COME TO CAIRO, EVEN BEFORE A PRIVILEGES AND IMMUNITIES AGREEMENT IS CONCLUDED. SFM HAS A RESTHOUSE HERE AND, SINCE I AM CONFIDENT SFM PEOPLE KNOW HOW TO BEHAVE, I FORESEE NO INSURMOUNTABLE PROBLEMS. MOREOVER, WE HAVE FAHMY'S ASSURANCE THAT, SHOULD SOME INCIDENT DEVELOP, GOE WILL COOPERATE TO WORK OUT A SATISFACTORY SETTLEMENT. AGAIN, THIS IS EXACTLY WHAT HAPPENDED WITH USN PERSONNEL. EGYPTIANS KEPT THEIR WORD IN THE ONE OR TWO MINOR CASES THAT CAME UP. APART FROM THAT, WE HAVE OVER 1700 AMERICANS IN EGYPT WHO LIVE AND WORK HERE WITHOUT ANY SPECIAL PRIVILEGES AND IMMUNITIES. INCIDENTS ARE RARE.

4. WHILE I HAD HEARD THAT MILITARY POLICE AT SUEZ CANAL HAD FAILED TO RECOGNIZE YOUR MINWAR ID CARD, I WAS NOT AWARE THIS HAS BECOME A REGULAR PROBLEM. I DOUBT IT IS CONSCIOUS HARASSMENT, BUT MORE LIKELY INEFFICIENCY WHICH AFFLICTS EVEN EGYPTIAN MILITARY COMMAND CHANNELS. I AM GETTING IN TOUCH WITH GENERAL MAGHOUB TO ASK THAT MILITARY POLICE UNITS IN THE EAST BANK AND SUEZ CANAL AREAS BE ADVISED OF MINWAR ID CARDS FOR SFM AND INSTRUCTED TO RESPECT THEM. IF THIS PRODUCES NO RESULTS, I WILL TAKE IT UP WITH GAMASY, HAD I KNOWN THAT THIS HAS BLOOMED INTO A MAJOR PROBLEM, WE WOULD HAVE TAKEN IT UP EARLIER. IF THERE ARE ANY OTHER SUCH PROBLEMS, LET US KNOW WITHOUT DELAY SO WE CAN DEAL WITH THEM. THIS KIND OF BUREAUCRATIC NONSENSE AFFLICTS ALL OF US AND WILL CONTINUE TO DO SO.

5. I ALSO AM CONFIDENT THAT DEPENDENTS IN CAIRO WILL HAVE NO PROBLEMS -- AT LEAST NO MORE THAN ANY OF THE REST OF US FACE. ON APRIL 15, POLCOUNS DISCUSSED WITH MFA LEGAL DIRECTOR NABIL AL-ARABY POSSIBILITY OF ISSUING MFA ID CARDS TO WIVES. AL-ARABY ASKED THAT WE GIVE HIM CONFIDENTIAL

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APPLICATIONS AND HE WOULD SEE WHAT COULD BE DONE. SFM LIAISON OFFICER D'AMATO IS PREPARING APPLICATIONS.

6. AS A FINAL THOUGHT, I WOULD SUGGEST THAT ANYONE WORKING HERE ACCEPT THREE BASIC OPERATIONAL PROPOSITIONS FOR HIW OWN AND HIS ORGANIZATION'S MENTAL HEALTH AND MORALE, VIZ.
A) NOTHING IS SIMPLE IN EGYPT.

B) EVERYTHING - OR VIRTUALLY SO - IS POSSIBLE IN
EGYPT.

C) TO GET FROM A TO B REQUIRES PATIENCE, PERSERVERANCE,
UNDERSTANDING AND A STRONG DOSE OF GOOD HUMOR.

7. I LOOK FORWARD TO SEEING YOU ON YOUR NEXT VISIT.
EILTS

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